hard work she improves her talents to such an extent that she soon becomes London's leading tragic actress.

Despite his sincre efforts to resist his growing fascination for Miriam, Peter finds himself deeply in love with his protegee. His ambition is to rise high in diplomatic service and end up one day as his country's ambassador. With all his love for the theatre, he does not, however, approve of the Bohemianism of the 'histrionic life/[1]* Passion, however, conquers, and he proposes to Julia who is now at the top of her acting fame. Miriam accuses him of betraying his artistic faith. It is Peter's faith in the theatre that has sustained and inspired Miriam to great artistic heights as an actress, and it is the same Peter who now wants her to give up acting and become his wife. Peter is unwilling to sacrifice his diplomatic career to become the 'husband of an actress'. While acknowledging her gratitude to him, Miriam makes it clear that she will not renounce art. By remaining firmly devoted to art, she preserves her artistic integrity.

Peter too will not turn traitor to his nature, and aspirations. His personal salvation lies in being true to his own disposition and ambition. Refinement lies in realising that the worlds of art and public affairs are separate and mutually exclusive. To make greater claims for one over the other is to reveal only a partial refinement of one's understanding and consciousness. Total refinement consists in one having a view of life in which art and politics occupy their distinct and rightful places as ideals, worthy of human aspiration.

The thematic premise in *The Tragic Muse,* namely total refinement, is elaborated through the subtle symbolic relationships (in the consciousness of the hero) by which are governed the morale traits of the man of sensibility. For Nick the private individual, the artistic world alone offers the richest possibility of attaining the fullest consciousness. For Nick, the public man of affairs, as others desire him to be, the pursuit of politics must be the means of social

consumma-
tion. James subtly interposes the theme of marriage within the
structure of these polarized forces in the hero's personality, and there-
by makes the element of successful choice a symptom of his true
refinement. Marriage is a very personal experience, and society
demands that it be converted into a public gesture of plebian, common
place aspiration for 'success', for 'political ambition'. Nick on the
contrary, views marriage as a means of self-attainment whose truth